

“HARLEY STREET”

FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE
PRESENT DAY

BY

PERCY FLEMMING

M.D., F.R.C.S., F.S.A.

LONDON

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PREFACE

THIS is an expansion of an address that I gave before the Royal Society of Medicine in 1927, when Sir James Berry was President. This in its turn was the outcome of a hobby I have pursued for years—amusing myself by trying to make the London of to-day tell the story of the past, doing this by studying the layout of the squares and streets, the possible significance of their names, noting differences of level and the nature of the soil as revealed by the excavations, often very deep and of late so frequent.

I am hoping that what follows may not only be of general interest, but may possibly induce some to explore on their own account in other parts of London. Two warnings suggest themselves: the exploring must be done on foot, and the recent activities of the L.C.C. in the matter of renaming streets have in some cases removed a useful clue and substituted a misleading one.

P. F.

. . . “ What we have loved
Others will love, and we will teach them how.”

The Prelude.

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NOTE.—In the text Harley Street in quotation marks is used in a generic sense and includes Wimpole Street, Upper Wimpole Street, Devonshire Place, Welbeck Street, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square and Mansfield Place.

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“ HARLEY STREET ” FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

I

HARLEY STREET BEFORE THE HOUSES

“ . . . This did I feel in London’s vast domain;
The Spirit of Nature was upon me there.”

The Prelude.

TO-DAY “ Harley Street ” is in the Borough of Marylebone, and its local affairs are managed by a Mayor, Aldermen and *Borough* Council, who transact their business in an imposing Town Hall in Marylebone Road. When the writer came to live in Harley Street in 1897 he found himself living in the *Parish* of Marylebone, its affairs being administered by an elected body called a Vestry, the Rector and Churchwardens of the parish being ex-officio members. The administrative headquarters was the Vestry Hall, a mean-looking building at the Oxford Street end of Marylebone Lane.

This organisation had come down from the time when Marylebone was a country village some four miles from London and Oxford Street was the road to Oxford. Going back still further, Marylebone Village was part of a larger territorial

unit, the Manor of Tyburn, so named in Domesday Book. A small river, the Tyburn, having its source on the heights of Hampstead, flowed along the western border of the manor, on its way to the Thames at Westminster. As will be described later, the soil of the north part of the manor was clay, that of the south gravel, and it was natural that the dependents of the lord of the manor should settle along the banks of the river where it flowed through the gravel, so forming the nucleus of the later village of Marylebone, and being responsible for the present layout of Marylebone High Street and Lane. Where is the Tyburn to-day? With the increase of population living near by, the river became foul from all sorts of refuse being thrown into it, and it was decided that this once pleasant river must be confined in a brick culvert, and for many years it served as a sewer. This covering in did not take place all at one time, and it is not possible to fix an exact date for the complete disappearance of the stream; but about 1800 or a little earlier the Tyburn was no longer visible. Owing to the construction of other sewers, and the drying up of the springs due to building operations, there is now no flow of water along the culvert, which has been shut off in places. Such a shut-off portion of the culvert, running along the west side of the Regent's Park Lake, was opened up and prepared for an air-raid shelter in 1938. The culvert was quite dry and measured 6 feet from top to bottom. The main stream would here and there receive small tributaries, and these have not been

captured and confined, and now and again assert themselves in an unpleasant way. The building of



THE S.E. SECTION OF NORDEN'S MAP OF MIDDLESEX (1592)
SHOWING LONDON, AND "MARIBONE," PADDINGTON, ETC.,
AS OUTLYING VILLAGES.

Scale: 3 miles to 2 inches (approx.).

the first part of Selfridge's in 1906 was held up for weeks in consequence of water being tapped, and incidentally a wild boar's skull, a remnant of

Marylebone's prehistoric inhabitants, was found in digging the foundations in Somerset Street.

It is possible with the aid of some imagination to follow the course of the river as it flowed through Marylebone Village, bearing in mind that the modern High Street is the successor of the village street. Standing at the corner of Harley Street and Wigmore Street, and looking along the latter when there is little or no traffic, a well marked dip in the road will be noted. This is the valley made by the river as it flowed for untold centuries. Walking along the west side of Harley Street, it will be noticed that the side streets—Queen Anne, New Cavendish, Weymouth, and to a less extent Devonshire—all slope down to the High Street, indicating the east side of the river valley. So it may be said that to-day Harley Street stands on the edge of the valley of the Tyburn of former times. Again, the winding character of Marylebone Lane is due to its following the windings of the former river. The covering in of the river explains the existence of some curious passages and footways in the neighbourhood of "Harley Street." Previous to its being covered, the stream had become quite narrow, and, land being wanted for houses, the latter had been built close up to the bank of the stream. Consequently the space resulting from covering the stream would not be wide enough for a road. Thus is explained the tortuous Jason Court leading from Marylebone Lane to Wigmore Street at the lowest part of the dip previously mentioned,

also St. Christopher Place, which leads to a slit-like passage, Gee Court, opening into Oxford Street. It will be noted that there is a well marked dip in Oxford Street at this point, which is the continuation of the valley noted in Wigmore Street.

[Across Oxford Street the line of the stream is indicated by South Molton Lane, Avery Row, South Bruton Mews, Hay Hill, Lansdowne Passage (now closed) to the dip in Piccadilly which marks the valley.]

The village of Marylebone was well off for water. The Tyburn river was reinforced by some springs situated where the Welbeck Palace Hotel now stands, and anywhere in the area it would only be necessary to dig a well 10 to 15 feet deep in order to obtain an abundant supply of water. Remnants of those wells are occasionally found to-day in the course of demolition and rebuilding of eighteenth-century Harley Street.

This abundance of water is due to the fact that in the Harley Street area the stiff London clay which fills a large part of the London Basin is here covered over by water-holding gravel, which in remote times was brought down by the Thames.

The recent (1938) excavations in the Harley Street area have revealed the extent and thickness of this stratum of gravel. The thickness was particularly well shown in Wigmore Street, where possibly the Thames gravel had been added to by gravel brought down from Hampstead by the

Tyburn. An excavation in Devonshire Street showed only a very thin layer of gravel, and the underlying clay was near the surface. And, finally, the trenches dug in Regent's Park were entirely in the clay. In a general way it is correct to say that this stratum of Thames gravel ceases about the line of Marylebone Road and Euston Road.

Just as towards the end of last century the Corporation of Manchester, becoming anxious about its water supply, as well they might, went as far afield as the Lake Country and purchased Thirlmere in order to obtain an increased supply, so in 1236 the Corporation of London (*i.e.*, what is to-day known as the City), anxious about its water supply, purchased land in Marylebone (now Stratford Place), collected water from the Tyburn and the neighbouring springs, and stored it in several reservoirs or tanks, called conduits, a word now obsolete in this sense and liable to be misunderstood. From these tanks or conduits the water was conveyed to the City in lead pipes laid along a falling gradient, and stored in conduits at several places for distribution. From time to time the Mayor and Corporation made official inspection of their waterworks: they rode on horseback and their ladies accompanied or followed them in wagons. It naturally follows that refreshment would be necessary after such a journey, and a banqueting house was built over two tanks situated at the end of what is now Stratford Place.

These periodic visitations must have been gala days for Marylebone, for it is recorded that on one such occasion (1562) the hare was hunted before dinner, and after dinner the fox—"there was a cry for a mile and at length the hounds killed him at the end of St. Giles'." There is no reason to suppose that this was an exceptional occasion, and one is left wondering how much time was given to the inspection.

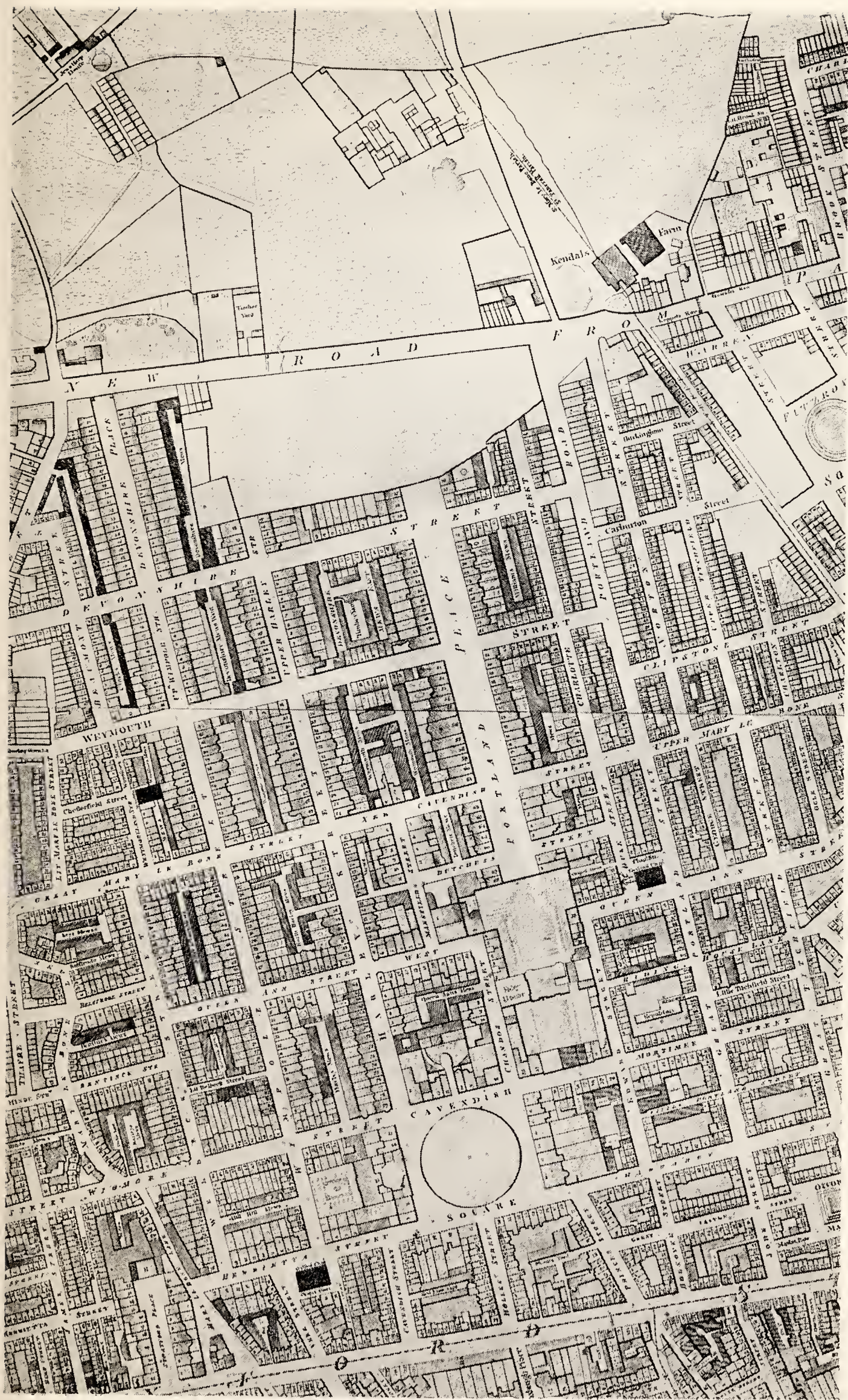
With the completion of the New River in 1613, the City had no need of the Marylebone supply, and did not draw from it after 1618. This may have been a factor in the subsequent development of Marylebone, when a supply of water would be needed for the new houses. The banqueting house survived in a dilapidated condition until 1737.

Henry VIII., recognising that the northern part of the manor was on clay and therefore unsuitable for dwellings, but would make an excellent deer park, obtained the manor in 1544. To increase the size of his park, Henry also acquired another manor adjoining the Manor of Tyburn on its east side. This later became incorporated in the parish of St. Pancras. The boundary stones on either side of the Broad Walk in Regent's Park indicate to-day where these two manors met. It was much used by him and Queen Elizabeth for sport and exercise. On a plan dated 1591 shown at a recent (1938) meeting of the British Records Association, the park surrounded by palings is named Maribone Park, a name it retained till the

nineteenth century, when it became Regent's Park.

This is not, as it may seem, a pure digression from Harley Street. James I., being hard up for money, sold the Manor of Tyburn, but, being passionately devoted to field sports, retained the deer park. His daughter Elizabeth, the future Winter Queen of Bohemia, "took the air on horseback in Marybon Park" during her last months in England (1613).^{*} In drawing the boundary line between the deer park and the rest of the manor, probably landmarks such as a cart-track, a ditch or stream would be used, landmarks which have long since disappeared, with the result that the boundary line to-day is very irregular. The boundary on the south crosses Harley Street from east to west a little above Devonshire Street, then runs northwards on the west of Harley Street, which it recrosses before continuing northwards across Marylebone Road. In this way the extreme north-west corner remains in private hands, while some of the houses on the east side are on Crown property to this day. (See Horwood's map.)

^{*} *Elizabeth of Bohemia* (Carola Oman).



PART OF HORWOOD'S MAP OF LONDON, 1792.

Shows the development of the Estate completed. The undeveloped area on either side of the New Road is Crown land. Kendal's Farm is on the East, Willan's Farm (not named) on the West.

II

THE OWNERS OF "HARLEY STREET"

" . . . a dear favourite of mine of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original brained generous Margaret Cavendish."

—CHARLES LAMB: *Mackery End*.

" My noble lovely little Peggy."—M. PRIOR.

THE story that follows is primarily the result of a study of street names, and as "Harley Street" is only a part of a large estate, it is necessary now and then to wander outside "Harley Street" as previously defined, in order to make the story complete. Names in italics are those which will be familiar as present-day street names.

Sir William Cavendish (d. 1557), a Suffolk landowner, son of Thomas Cavendish, is usually regarded as the founder of the *Cavendish* family. He had an elder brother George, who is now remembered as the author of the *Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*. George Cavendish was a superior kind of body-servant to the Cardinal, and continued to serve him faithfully in the time of his adversity. The biography is notable as being the first of its kind in the English language, and also for the interesting details that it gives of the Cardinal's daily life. Thus Cavendish tells us that, when on a mission to the King of France, after a day's negotiations the Cardinal rose at 4 a.m., sitting down to write letters to the King of England with

his own hand until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, during the whole of which time he sat with his nightcap on and did not have anything to eat, nor did he get up to pass water.*

After the death of the Cardinal, George Cavendish retired into private life and obscurity, whereas his younger brother William became much better known and for many years was supposed to be the author of the *Life*, an error not finally disproved till 1814 by Joseph Hunter in an essay on "Who Wrote Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey?*". This William Cavendish must have been a very able man, but his career was largely helped by his marriage in 1547 to a Derbyshire heiress generally known as "Bess of Hardwick." She had a passion for building and persuaded her husband to sell his Suffolk property, and started to build Chatsworth on the site of the present house of the Devonshires. A son of this marriage was created Earl of *Devonshire* and was the ancestor of the long line of Earls and Dukes of that name.

The present story is more concerned with the marriage of a daughter, Mary, to the seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, the owner of *Welbeck Abbey* and *Bolsover Castle*. The Earl conveyed both these properties to his wife's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, who had married Katherine *Ogle*. Their son William Cavendish (1593-1676) was created Earl, then Marquess, and after the Restoration in 1660 Duke of Newcastle. He took a prominent part in the Civil War, but was badly

* The *Life* is published in Dent's Temple Classics.

defeated at the battle of Marston Moor, where "he displayed much courage but little skill." After his defeat he went into exile, remaining abroad until Charles "came into his own." When in exile he married his second wife *Margaret* Lucas. His friends frowned on this engagement and marriage, but it turned out to be a very happy one. There is a huge monument to the Duke and *Duchess* in the North Transept of Westminster Abbey, between the monuments of Beaconsfield and the Cannings; and her epitaph, which Dean Stanley says was written by her husband, sets out that she "was a virtuous, loving and carefull wife, was with her Lord all the time of his banishment and miseries, and when he came home never parted from him in his solitary retirement." It is tempting to write more fully about this interesting and rather eccentric lady. Charles Lamb's admiration for her appears at the head of this chapter. She is the subject of an essay by Virginia Woolf in *The Common Reader*.* She wrote on all subjects, including medicine. In stressing the all-importance of correct diagnosis, which in her opinion necessitated a specialist for every malady, she is up against the ignorance and incompetence of the general practitioner of the day, and in consequence she omits to mention how the correct specialist is to be chosen.† Pepys thought the Duchess "a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman," but he had

* Now published as a Pelican book.

† Much of interest about this lady will be found in *Welbeck Abbey and its Owners*. 1938.

made three fruitless journeys in order to catch a sight of her when she was in London, and this may have biased him to some extent.

The Duke's eldest son, Viscount *Mansfield*, died without issue, and the younger son became the second Duke in 1676. A daughter of this second Duke, Lady *Margaret Cavendish*, married John *Holles*, Earl of Clare, and later created Duke of Newcastle.* This Duke in 1708 purchased that part of the Manor of Tyburn which later was to become "Harley Street." Under the will of Margaret's father, the second Duke, all the Cavendish estates passed to her and so to John Holles, and by the terms of the will the latter had control of the property. It was an ancestor of this John Holles, Denzil Holles, who helped to hold the Speaker in the Chair when Eliot attempted to address the House of Commons contrary to the orders of Charles I.

In the early days of *Queen Anne* a friendship, at first political and later personal, sprang up between Newcastle and Robert *Harley*,† later Earl of Oxford and *Mortimer*. The double title was perhaps taken to avoid a possible claimant to the Earldom of Oxford, which had become extinct by the recent death of Aubrey de Vere (*cf.* Oxford and Asquith). The Harley family had

* The second Duke died without male issue, and so the title became extinct and was revived in the person of John Holles, Earl of Clare.

† Robert Harley married first Elizabeth *Foley* and second Sarah *Myddleton*—names recalled by two streets east of Great Portland Street.

in 1601 purchased the estate of *Wigmore* with its castle (about six miles from Ludlow, in Herefordshire), and Robert took the title of Baron Wigmore in addition to his Earldom of Oxford. In 1713 Newcastle's daughter *Henrietta* Cavendish Holles (1694-1755) married Harley's son, later Earl of Oxford. The marriage took place at Harley's country house, *Wimpole*, in Cambridgeshire. The household there seems to have been a happy one, and it is recorded* that the old Earl loved to stay at Wimpole.

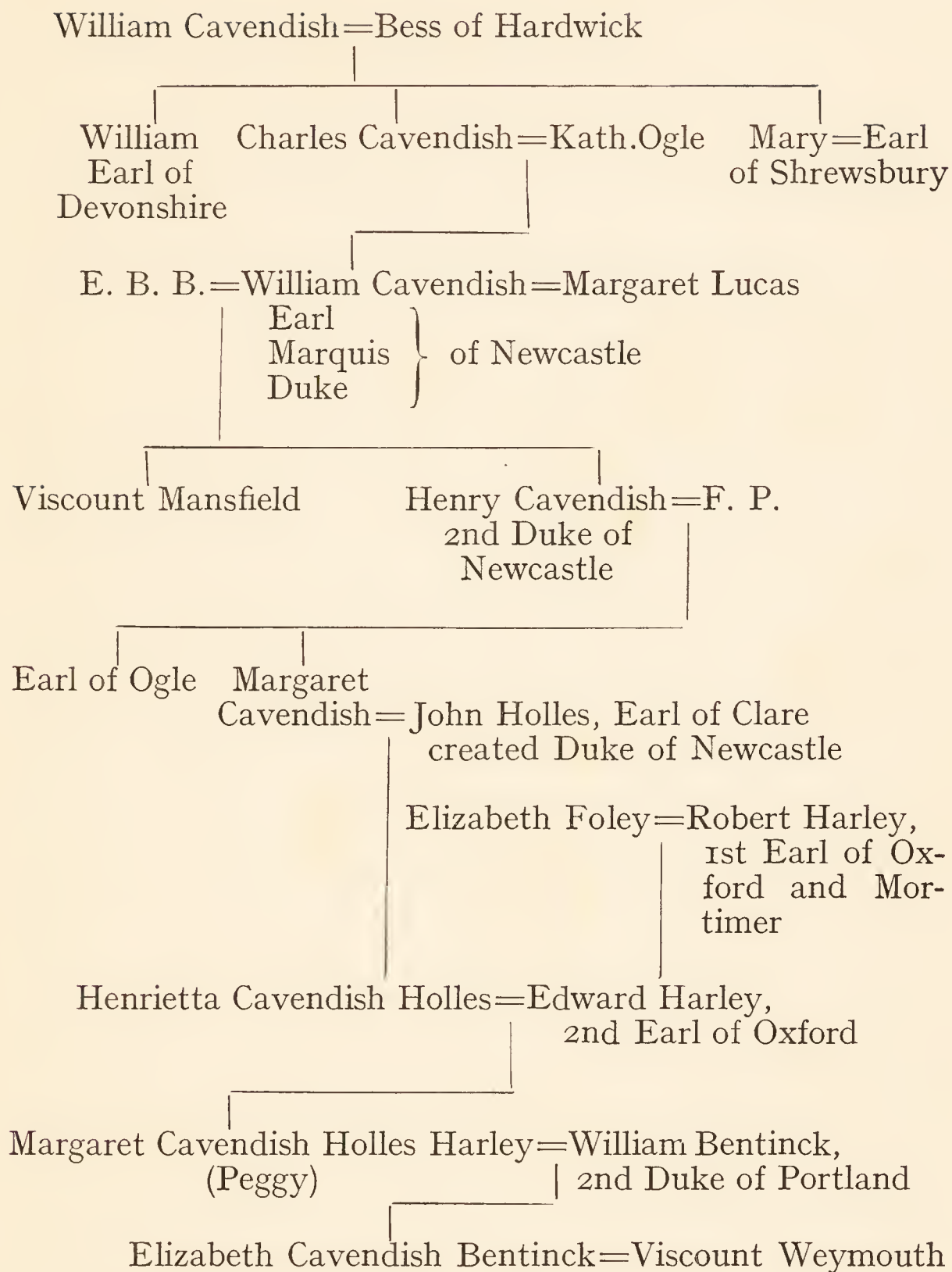
A daughter was born in 1715 named *Margaret* Cavendish Holles Harley. She seems to have been a nice child and is referred to sometimes as "Sweet Peggy" and, in Prior's words quoted at the head of this chapter, "noble lovely little Peggy.† Subsequently in 1734 Peggy married *William Bentinck*, second Duke of *Portland*, bringing with her the London property of the Cavendishes, which remained in the Portland family until 1903. This Duke of Portland was the grandson of the Bentinck who came over with Dutch William in 1688 and was his chief counsellor and adviser. After their

* *Welbeck Abbey and its Owners.*

† The words commence a letter in verse by Prior to Kitty when she was a child. The last verse ran:

" And dearest child along the day
In everything you do and say
Obey and please my lord and lady
So God shall love and angels aid ye.
And if to these precepts you attend
No second letter need I send,
And so I rest your constant friend."

marriage the Duke and Duchess lived a good deal at *Bulstrode* Park, the country residence of the Portlands, near Gerrard's Cross, and now in process of development. To complete the story as far as street names are concerned, it should be mentioned that Viscount *Weymouth* married in 1759 Elizabeth Cavendish Bentinck, one of the daughters of the Portland-Peggy marriage. It was said of this family that "all the daughters were beautiful and good."



[Only the names mentioned in the text are included in this table.]

III

DEVELOPMENT OF "HARLEY STREET"

" . . . entered London immediately behind the elegant mansions on the north side of Cavendish Square."—*A Book for a Rainy Day*, 1772.

IN the Crace Collection of Maps and Plans in the British Museum is a plan of the estate purchased by Newcastle in 1708-1710. It shows that the whole area was rural. The village street followed the line of the present Marylebone High Street; at its north end was the Parish Church, standing on the site of the old Marylebone Church behind the present one. This end of the village seems to have been the "village centre," for the plan shows three bowling greens, one a little north of the present Paddington Street and west of High Street, the other two one on either side of the present Weymouth Street where it enters the High Street. The estate is marked out into numerous fields—one, the dung field, would occupy about the middle of the present Portland Place. Another field in the south-west corner was named Mill Hill. Until a few years ago Debenham's Car Park was named Mill Hill Place, and the name can to-day (1938) just be made out on the side of the house at the corner of the entrance.

As has been mentioned, the estate came into the possession of Edward Harley (Lord Oxford) and

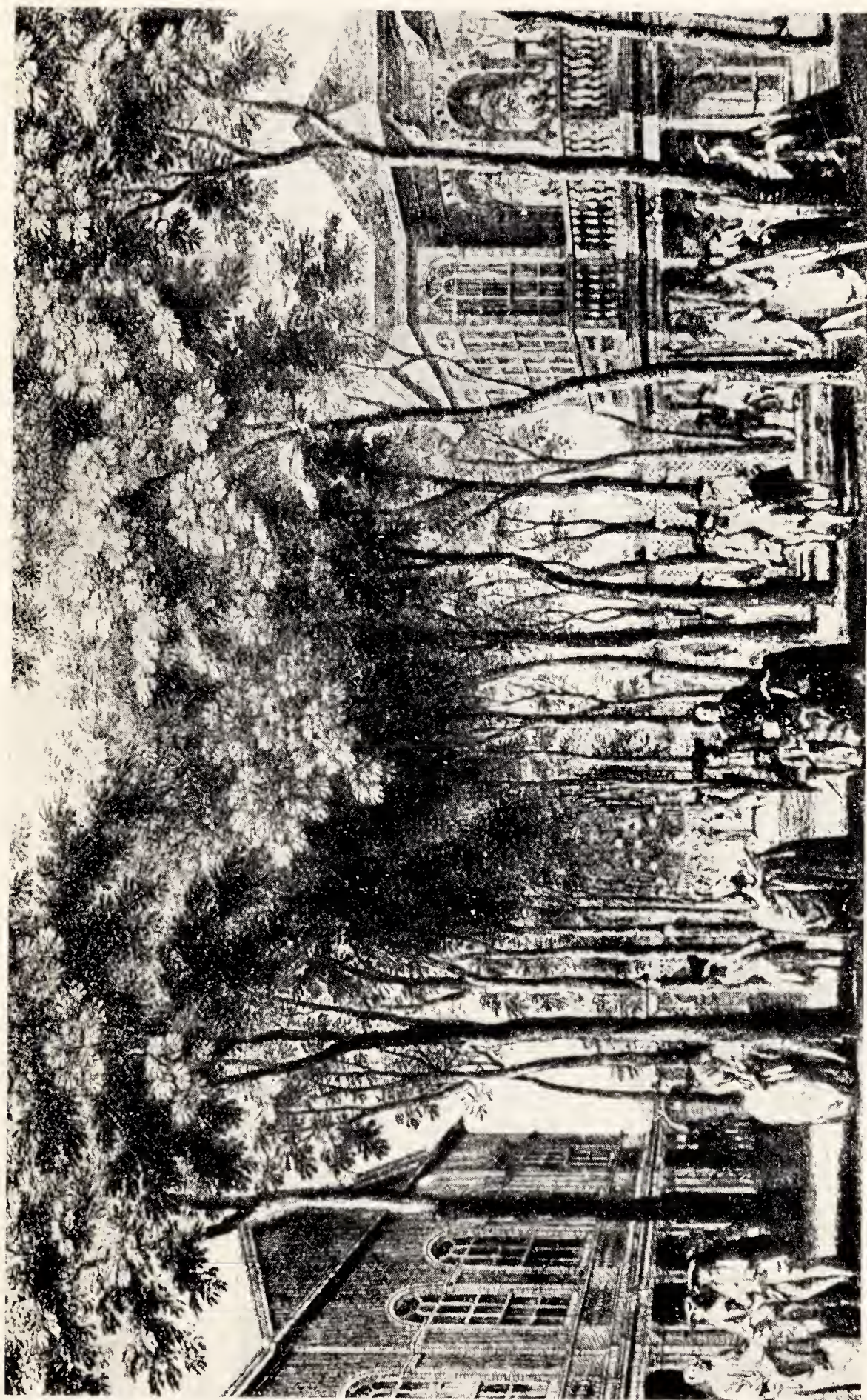


PART OF ROCQUE'S MAP OF LONDON, 1746.
Reproduced by the London Topographical Society.

“Peggy” Cavendish and in 1719 a plan was made to their order (also in the Crace Collection), and the general layout which it proposed is much the same as actually exists to-day. There seems to have been some anxiety as to the wisdom of laying out Cavendish Square as proposed, for in the margin the exact distance from the centre of this square to neighbouring squares is set out. The development of the estate began with the building of Cavendish Square in 1719; but the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1721-1722 held up the proceedings and the square developed in a rather piecemeal fashion. It is shown completed in Rocque’s map dated 1746, but at that time there were no buildings north of it. Mortimer and Margaret Streets run from the north-east and south-east corners of the square; Wigmore Street appears as Wigmore Row; the streets south of the square are as at present. The site of Mansfield Street is occupied by a large reservoir—filled up in 1764-1766—an important factor in the early development of the estate. A prominent feature in this map are the Marylebone Gardens, a popular pleasure resort in the latter part of the seventeenth century and first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, finally closing down in 1778. The bowling greens indicated in the Newcastle plan near Weymouth Street (p. 16) were later included in the gardens, which occupied the site of the present Beaumont Street, Devonshire Place and Upper Wimpole Street. A map of 1768 shows Wigmore Street, Harley Street as far as Weymouth Street, Wimpole Street,

Welbeck Street, Bentinck Street and Bulstrode Street.

The ceilings, staircases and mantelpieces of the "Harley Street" houses are a reminder that the brothers Adam were concerned in the development of the estate, more particularly with Mansfield Street, which was completed in 1773. This latter was an instance of speculative building, the houses being meant for sale and not built to the order of private individuals as many of the Adam houses were. In consequence, some of the work was shoddy, the doors being of deal and not of mahogany. The large house in New Cavendish Street facing Mansfield Street is on a site originally intended for an Adam house for the Duke of Portland. Harley Street as designed by the Harleys could not be continued to Marylebone Road, being blocked by the Crown property, and when developed this north end of Harley Street was for long known as Upper Harley Street. In a somewhat similar way, the development northwards of Wimpole Street was interrupted by the Marylebone Gardens, and after the gardens were closed (1778), Upper Wimpole Street, a little wider than Wimpole Street, and Devonshire Place, wider still, were planned, causing a confusion in street nomenclature which seems likely to persist. (See Horwood's map, facing p. 8.)



MARYLEBONE GARDENS, 1755.

IV

FASHIONABLE " HARLEY STREET "

" Then she will open one of the best houses in Wimpole Street."—*Mansfield Park*.

FOR the first hundred years or more of its existence Harley Street and the neighbouring streets were the abode of fashionable society. One of the very earliest residents in Cavendish Square was Lady Mary Montagu, who was responsible for the introduction of inoculation for smallpox into this country. She was in Adrianople in 1717 and had witnessed the operation called by her " ingrafting " performed, as was the custom, by an old woman using a broad needle with which she " opened the veins." Lady Mary had the hardihood to have her small son, aged three years, " ingrafted," fortunately with success. It is not surprising that many people flocked to the house in Cavendish Square to see the " show " boy and look at his scars. Lady Mary had a bad time at first. The " faculty " were against her—for sordid reasons, she suggests; the clergy preached against her for interfering with divine providence, and the people hooted at her for being an unnatural mother. She was a great friend of the second Countess of Oxford (p. 13), and many letters passed between them.

It would be tedious to mention many residents.

William Pitt was an early one in "Harley Street," as was Turner the painter. Nelson's widow died at her house in Harley Street in 1831.

When Wellington—or Sir Arthur Wellesley—left for Portugal in 1808 he took a house for his wife, Kitty, and the two small boys in "Harley Street" near Cavendish Square. He continued to rent this house till 1814, two years before he went to Apsley House, but he cannot have lived there himself as he did not return to England until 1814. One may perhaps be permitted to think of Kitty there, watching her two sons grow up, hearing the news of her husband's victories and glorying in his growing importance. (It is misleading to quote the numbers of the houses, as Harley Street has been renumbered more than once.) Boswell was living in Queen Anne Street in 1788, and describes it in a letter as being in a quite genteel neighbourhood, using that word in its original sense, as appropriate to persons of quality, and not in the ironic sense in which it is now usually employed. Everyone to-day knows that the Barretts lived in Wimpole Street, but it is not so well known that Edmund Burke was living there in 1759. Henry Hallam lived at 61, Wimpole Street, a house commemorated in Tennyson's lines:

"Dark house by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street."

Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park* makes Mr. Rushworth with his £12,000 a year take a house in Wimpole Street after his marriage in 1808 to

Miss Bertram, and Miss Crawford's opinion of the house is quoted at the head of this chapter. Mrs. Gaskell, writing in 1855, makes a house in "Harley Street" the house of the fashionable family she is describing in *North and South*, and tells of the nursery at the top of a vast number of stairs.

Dr. Thomas Young, remembered to-day as a scientist and the author of a theory of colour vision, was also a practising physician, and on the staff of St. George's Hospital for many years. He lived at 48, Welbeck Street from 1799 to 1826. Although Young was a physician, he really belongs to fashionable Harley Street, as many years were to pass before the streets became medical. What in all probability took him to Harley Street was the society that he found there.

In spite of the time Young gave to practice and to research, he yet was "always ready to take his part in a dance or glee, or to join in any scheme of amusement calculated to give life and interest to a party." In other words, he was a society man. He found his bride, Eliza Maxwell, at 69, Harley Street, and a very happy marriage was the result.

Thomas Young was one of a Committee of Fellows of the Royal Society appointed in 1814 to report on the possible danger to health from the introduction of lighting by coal gas. It is still possible to find in Harley Street examples of wrought-iron lamp brackets with the attached torch extinguishers recalling the method of street lighting before the introduction of gas.

A picture of "Harley Street" in 1818 is given by Richard Rush, Envoy Extraordinary from the United States, 1817-1825.* The district was so quiet and the houses so good that it was favoured by several Ambassadors for their residences; but he himself, not being so highly paid, had to content himself with a residence in Baker Street. Harley Street, Wimpole Street, Devonshire Place, present, he says, a long range of houses built of dark brick that gives them a gloomy appearance, relieved by a vista of Regent's Park which suggests the nearness of the country. There were a number of ready furnished houses to be hired, rents ranging from 400 to 1,000 guineas a year. He visited some of these, noted the stone staircases, how all the floors were carpeted, rooms well furnished, and in some a library was available. The streets must have presented every morning somewhat the same appearance as they do now throughout Sunday. The rumbling of equipages began, he says, about two o'clock, abating in the evening and returning at midnight. Apart from a straggling servant in morning livery or a butcher boy issuing here and there from an area, no one was to be seen on the pavement before noon.

The custom of the country families to spend the season in London may possibly explain the number of furnished houses to be let noted by Rush.

There was, of course, no sudden change from fashionable to medical "Harley Street"; and when the doctors did begin to arrive they wished to be

* *A Residence at the Court of London* (Richard Rush, 1533).

as near Cavendish Square as possible, leaving the upper part of Harley Street to the fashion. Thus, when in 1875 Gladstone decided with much regret that he must leave his house in Carlton House Terrace, he moved to 73, Harley Street and lived there for the next five years. In 1878 Gladstone deliberately set himself against a wave of public enthusiasm that approved Disraeli's Turkish policy involving a possible war with Russia. Gladstone, writing from Harley Street on February 24, relates that "between four and six, three parties of the populace arrived here, the first with cheers, the two others hostile. Windows were broken and much hooting. The last detachment was only kept away by mounted police." A Peace Meeting had been held in Hyde Park in the afternoon, and it is not surprising that it ended in rowdyism; the parties mentioned by Gladstone must have come from this meeting. The following Sunday another gathering was held off by the police. Gladstone writes: "I walked down with C. and as a large crowd gathered, though in the main friendly, we went into Dr. Clark's." This would be Dr. (later Sir) Andrew Clark, who was practising at 16, Cavendish Square. The disturbance did not prevent Gladstone entertaining, as reported in *The Times*, a "select party at dinner" on the same evening "at his house in Harley Street, Cavendish Square." The wave of enthusiasm mentioned above incidentally coined the word "jingo" as an advocate of a bellicose policy.

Medical readers will probably not be surprised

to learn that the kind of distinguished society inhabiting Harley Street should induce a quack to start practice there. In 1820 St. John Long was living in Harley Street and in the Court Guide is described as a "rubber." Long was an Irishman who started life as an artist and later discovered an original method of treating consumption, rheumatism and other complaints by the application of corrosive liniments and friction. Unfortunately, in one case the treatment produced a "formidable sore" in a young lady patient, which later became gangrenous and caused her death. On October 30, 1830, Long was tried at the Old Bailey on a coroner's warrant and found guilty of manslaughter. But, as might be expected, "a great number of distinguished persons deposed to the marvellous cures effected by this empiric," and Long got off with a fine of £250, which was promptly paid. He died in 1834 from a "burst bloodvessel," and his executors were said to have sold the secret for £10,000 (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830, pt. ii., 461, and 1834, pt. iv., 656). Is it just medical prejudice to feel surprise at this worthy's name being included in the *Dictionary of National Biography*?

The account which follows, of a walk in Maribone Park in 1772, prescribed by a doctor as part of a "cure," may serve as a link between fashionable and medical Harley Street.

John Thomas Smith, author of a gossipy book called *A Book for a Rainy Day* and for seventeen years keeper of the prints at the British Museum, entered this world as his mother was being driven

in a hackney coach to her residence in Great Portland Street.

In the meantime Dr. William Hunter, brother of John, had been sent for from his house in Jermyn Street and was soon in attendance. Smith does not seem to have suffered in any way, but in the book mentioned above he tells us that six years later his mother was in declining health and had consulted a Dr. Armstrong, who advised her "to rise early and take milk at the cow-house," and proceeds to describe one such walk he took in company with her, which he says he well remembered, although he was only six years old at the time.

Starting from their house in Great Portland Street (near Oxford Street), there were fields all the way on either side to the New Road (*i.e.*, the Marylebone Road), crossing which they came to a turnstile leading to a meadow at the end of which was a public-house called the Queen's Head and Artichoke. (The site is now occupied by part of Coliseum Terrace.) Passing through another turnstile, Smith and his mother arrived at a second place of refreshment, the Jew's Harp Tea Gardens. (The couple had now crossed the outer circle, walked across a corner of the Flower Gardens, and crossed the road leading to Queen Mary's Gardens. The site of the Jew's Harp is now occupied by the greenhouses belonging to H.M. Office of Works.) Continuing, they reached Willan's Farm, the limit of their walk, and there Mrs. Smith sat in a room called Queen Elizabeth's kitchen

and drank her milk. After resting they crossed the New Road and entered London immediately behind the elegant mansions on the north side of Cavendish Square. (They probably went along the High Street and then across Harley Street.) The square at that time was enclosed by a dwarf brick wall surmounted by a heavy wooden railing. Willan's Farm of about 288 acres occupied the west part of the present Regent's Park.

As Smith does not give the first name of the Dr. Armstrong his mother consulted, it is not possible to identify him. It is just possible that it was Dr. John Armstrong (1709-1779), author of a poem in four books called *The Art of Preserving Health*. He was an advocate of fresh air and exercise, and writes:

“ Begin with gentle toil, and as your nerves
Grow firm to hardier, by just steps aspire.”

V

MEDICAL “ HARLEY STREET ”

“ That is the street where the expensive doctors live.”

FOR the last seventy to eighty years “ Harley Street ” has been regarded as the home or headquarters of the consultants. It is worth while to attempt a definition of a consultant. Perhaps the simplest but hardly adequate definition is the remark at the head of this chapter which the writer heard on the top of a bus passing along Marylebone Road. The term “ consultant ” as applied to a medical man—physician, surgeon, or specialist—should indicate that the man in question is able by his special experience and attainments to be in a position to co-operate with a general practitioner in the treatment of difficult or anxious cases. Such experience is gained in the service of one of the large general or special hospitals. In addition to the experience gained by observing a large number of patients, opportunities of enlarging that experience are afforded by discussing problems with colleagues working at the same hospital. This experience will be all the more valuable if the hospital is connected with a medical school, for in that case it is incumbent on the teacher to keep himself up to date by being conversant with research in this and other coun-

tries. Several years of post-graduate study, often unremunerative from the money point of view, are necessary before a man can hope to attain to the position on the staff of one of these hospitals.

Letters appear from time to time in the *Lancet* indicating how impossible it is to come to an agreed definition of a consultant. Common sense must be used in applying the definition given above. For example, it would be absurd for an ophthalmic surgeon to postpone removing a foreign body from the eye until he had communicated with the patient's doctor.

Before the invasion of Harley Street there were two main groups of consultants—a smaller one, based on St. George's Hospital, living in the Piccadilly neighbourhood, and a larger one in the City. This latter was based on the four large hospitals—St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's, Guy's and the London—and Finsbury Square and Circus, Broad Street and Bridge Street were the favoured spots for residences. Perhaps it should be mentioned that up to 1862 St. Thomas's Hospital was in Southwark, close to London Bridge. It must also be remembered, as accounting for the City consultants, that at this period there was a considerable and wealthy residential population in the City. This population began to move westwards in the eighteenth century as the West End developed, and, as previously noted, this part of the town was favoured by the country families when they came up for the season. In the early part of the nineteenth century the City consultants thought

it was time to follow the fashion and to move west.

They started in rather a timid fashion, a temporary halt taking place in Bloomsbury. When the march westward was resumed the area chosen for settlement was between Oxford Street on the north and Piccadilly on the south—Grosvenor Street, Sackville Street, Savile Row, George Street, Hanover Square being the favourite streets. Later some daring pioneer crossed Oxford Street and settled near Cavendish Square, soon to be followed by others. To be as near Cavendish Square as possible was considered to be all-important, and this continued to be so up to the eighties of the last century, as is evidenced by a story the late Sir John Tweedy told the writer. Up to the year 1888 he had practised at 24, Harley Street, close to Cavendish Square. In 1886 he moved to 100, Harley Street, between Weymouth and Devonshire Streets, a little over 500 yards from the square. On hearing of this move, some of his older colleagues warned him that he was committing professional suicide by moving so far away.

These movements are mirrored in an interesting way in the history of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, founded in 1805, one of several scientific societies which sprang up at this time, the number of which so alarmed Sir Joseph Banks, at that time President of the Royal Society, that he told a friend that all these newfangled associations would finally dismantle the Royal Society and not leave the old lady a rag to cover her. The Society

had its first rooms in Gray's Inn, then moved to Lincoln's Inn, remaining there till 1834, when a move was made to Berners Street—a street running from Oxford Street to the Middlesex Hospital. A move west was taken in 1889, to a house in Hanover Square. In 1907 the Royal Society of Medicine was formed by the union of the hundred-year-old society with some of the younger ones—Pathological, Obstetrical, Clinical. Finally, in 1912 this new society crossed Oxford Street to settle in its present home in Wimpole Street. The Presidents in the early years of the Society lived in the Bloomsbury area; from 1833 to 1867 the Hanover Square neighbourhood was favoured. Sir George Burrows was in 1867 practising in Cavendish Square—the first President to cross Oxford Street.

Another way to picture the gradual move of the profession westwards is to note the addresses of particular individuals at different times. For this purpose the writer has traced the residences of the members of the staff of Moorfields Eye Hospital and of University College Hospital, two hospitals that he has been privileged to serve. Moorfields was founded in 1805, and its founder, Saunders, who died five years later, practised at Charterhouse Square.

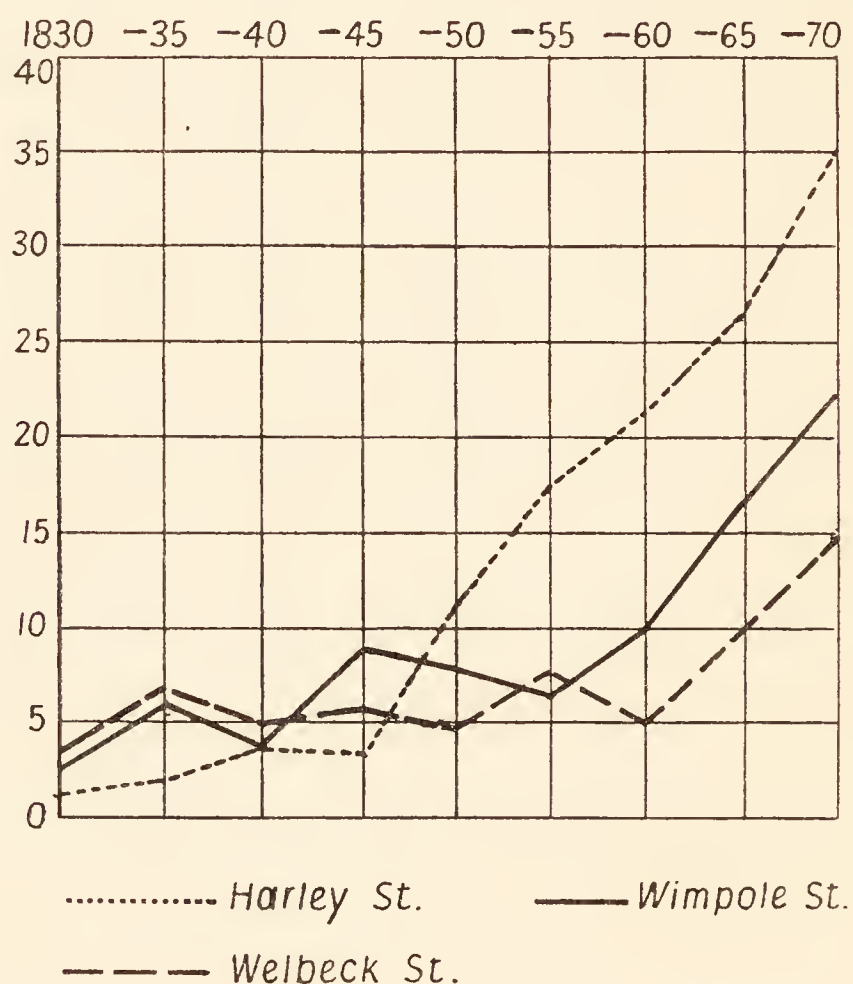
Travers, the real founder of the School, moved from Broad Street to Bruton Street, Piccadilly, in 1826; Dalrymple moved to Holles Street, Cavendish Square, in 1841, but apparently was not quite happy north of Oxford Street, and soon

crossed to the south of it and settled in Grosvenor Street, near where his colleagues Dixon—who had moved from Broad Street—Streatfeild and Hulke practised. George Critchett was the first member of the staff to settle in Harley Street, moving from Finsbury Square in 1864, followed by George Lawson in 1865, each of them securing houses near Cavendish Square.

University College Hospital was opened in 1833 in Gower Street, and at that time was regarded as being in North London, and it is natural to find the newly formed staff living near by. Samuel Cooper, author of a famous Dictionary, practised first in Great Russell Street, and later till his death in 1848 in Woburn Place. Richard Quain the surgeon was in Keppel Street, Gower Street, till 1850, when he moved to Cavendish Square. Dr. Davies, Professor of Midwifery, practised at Fitzroy Street in 1833, and continued in the neighbourhood until his death in 1841. Walshe in 1843 was practising at Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, moving to Queen Anne Street four years later.

Robert Liston, coming from Edinburgh, would naturally be at pains to ascertain the correct place to live, and in 1833 he is at Old Burlington Street, moving in 1838 to Clifford Street, Bond Street, to a house taken by William Bowman after Liston's death. Syme was a few months on the staff of the hospital, and for that time lived at 22, Bruton Street. Erichsen moved from Welbeck Street to Cavendish Place in 1860,

having as his neighbours Clover, the pioneer anæsthetist, Meadows and Mummery. When describing the development of "Harley Street" it was pointed out that Mortimer Street was continued across Regent Street, to the north-east corner of Cavendish Square. It must have occurred to some interested person that, as the heads of the



profession were anxious to have an address associated with Cavendish Square, it would be a profitable piece of business to change the name of the west end of Mortimer Street into Cavendish Place, and as has been shown, the event showed his shrewdness. William Jenner moved to 8, Harley Street in 1851, two years after his appointment to the hospital. Garrod, who was

for some years on the staff of University College Hospital, moved from Charterhouse Square to Harley Street in 1848.

By the sixties it is clear from the records that a young man starting consulting work felt that Harley Street was the correct place to put up his plate.

The accompanying graph, compiled from the Court Guides and Medical Directory, shows the steady invasion of Harley Street by the medical profession after 1845.

VI

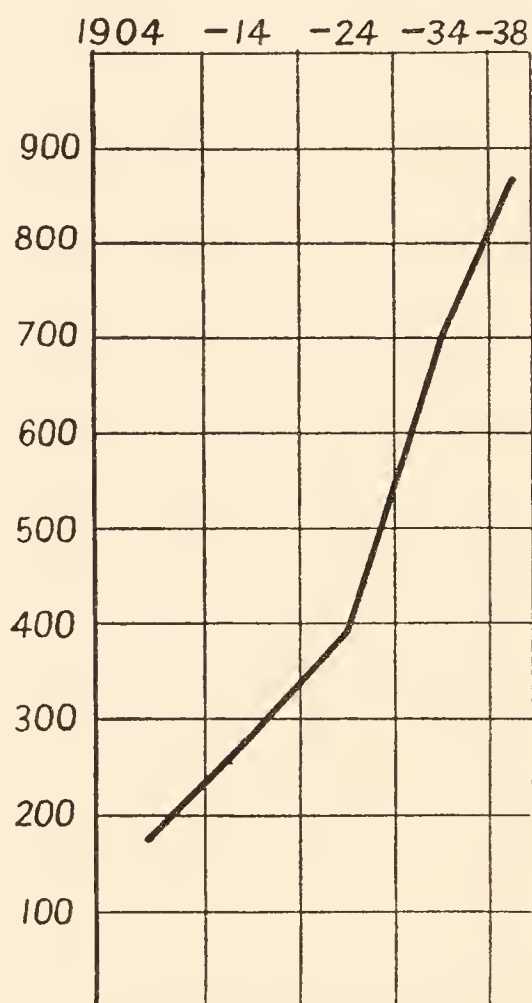
CHANGING HARLEY STREET

“What the well trained consultant really has to contend with, however, is the state of mind that prefers an address to a degree.”—*Lancet*.

It is well known that members of the medical profession are not allowed to advertise. If anyone does so, the General Medical Council, in the exercise of the disciplinary jurisdiction over medical practitioners conferred on them by the Medical Act of 1858, may remove his name from the Register. There are ways of advertising other than a notice inserted in a newspaper. As the *Lancet* remarked in a recent article (October 22, 1938), it may be very difficult to draw the line between what is and what is not to be considered an advertisement. It is arguable, for instance, that the doctor's brass plate is a form of advertisement, but its usefulness in possible emergencies makes its use allowable, and no one could seriously describe it as objectionable. But the border-line between usefulness and mere advertisement may be passed when the plate and lettering are quite unnecessarily large. The lease of a house in Harley Street purchased by the writer contained several prohibitions reminiscent of the former fashionable days of the street, and among them one forbidding the use of a door-plate. When

one had signed the lease with this restriction, permission to put up a plate could be purchased, but its size was precisely defined.

Since 1920 there has been a rapid increase in the number of door-plates to be seen in Harley Street and the neighbouring streets. The accompanying graph shows the number of addresses in Harley Street—in the limited sense—given in the Medical Directory for the years 1904, 1914, 1924, 1934 and 1938. It will be noticed that whereas there was an increase of 100 from 1904 to 1914, and again from 1914 to 1924 (the exact number was 112), there was an increase of 300 in the next ten years, and of 160 in the next four years. There has naturally resulted a large increase in the number of door-plates.



Showing the number of addresses in Harley St.

To-day there are several varieties of "door-plate." The modern one is no longer brass but chromium. As there has been no increase in the number of front doors, the plates now have to be much smaller, and in many cases are inserted in a frame holding several, which seems designed to meet a possible frequent change of tenant. The front door cannot

accommodate more than three or four, including the flap of the letter-box, and room has to be found for others on the side posts of the doorway. What is the significance of this change? In part, but only in part, it may be accounted for by the increase in the numbers on the staffs of the hospitals. The main reason seems to be that in many cases the "Harley Street" address is only one of two addresses where practice is carried on, the other one being, say, somewhere in the suburbs, at Putney, Hampstead, Tooting, etc.

It is clear from this that some importance is attached to an address in "Harley Street" by doctors as in earlier days was attached to the nearness to Cavendish Square. There is, of course, no objection to this double address, but it does represent a change in the significance of a Harley Street door-plate. In former times it did indicate a kind of diploma, and a member of the public consulting a doctor in "Harley Street" could be sure that he was seeing one who had acquired special qualifications by the kind of training indicated at the beginning of the previous section. But to-day this is no longer the case, and the public seem to take no pains to distinguish between an address and a degree. Perhaps the consultants in the future may be distinguished by not having a door-plate.

To accommodate all these recent comers another change had to be made, one which, perhaps rendered necessary by changing times, is nevertheless regretted by the writer. The well

proportioned rooms with their beautiful ceilings and mantelpieces designed by the brothers Adam are being cut up to make smaller ones—"maisonettes and consulting suites" as the notice board indicates. On the other hand, a use has been found for the vast basements in Harley Street, the despair of the modern housekeeper. In some cases they are fitted up to meet the needs of the radiologist, affording space free from vibration for his extensive apparatus, a dark room, and waiting room, the latter being the former pantry looking on to the front area.

The door with the single plate, signifying that the house was not only a professional but also a family one, has almost, but not quite, disappeared from Harley Street.

To-day there is no permanence in street names. So far, the activities of the L.C.C. have not altered any of the "Harley Street" names. But even if they had done so, or if Harley Street were to be destroyed, the name of Harley would still live on. Both the Harleys (father and son) were great collectors of books, manuscripts, coins, medals, and miniatures. After the death of Edward Harley in 1741 the collection was in great part sold, but his widow retained the collection of manuscripts intact. In 1753 the Government of the day was considering what they should do with the extensive collection made by Sir Hans Sloane, which he had offered to the country for the nominal sum of £10,000. The discussion

led to the founding of the British Museum, and Harley's widow was approached as to whether she would part with the manuscripts for £10,000, the collection to be known as the Harleian Manuscripts and to be lodged in the British Museum. The decision was left to her daughter, the Duchess of Portland (Peggy), who willingly assented, although the collection had cost much more than ten thousand pounds.

To-day these Harleian Manuscripts and the Harleian Miscellany published in 1744, containing extracts from Harley's collection, are known to scholars all the world over, and in this way it seems that Harley's name will live for evermore, even if the doctors leave the street or its name be changed, or the street disappear.

